<u>AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS</u>

Please cancel claims 1-10. Please amend claims 11-22 as follows. Please add new claims 24-25. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

1-10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A method for inhibiting <u>or reducing</u> differentiation of a Th precursor (Thp) cell or cell population into a Th2 cell or cell population, comprising[[:]] contacting said Thp cell or <u>cell</u> population <u>from a subject or sample of interest</u> with an antagonist of <u>IL-21 or IL-21R</u> ~~an interleukin-21 (IL-21)/IL-21 receptor (IL-21R)~~ in an amount sufficient to inhibit <u>or reduce the</u> differentiation ~~of said Thp cell or cell population into said Th2 cell population,~~ <u>wherein the inhibition or reduction of the differentiation is measured by comparing the level of Th2 cells in the contacted cell or cell population from the subject or sample of interest to the level of Th2 cells in a control subject or sample, and</u> wherein the antagonist is selected from the group consisting of an ~~anti-IL21R~~ <u>anti-IL-21R</u> antibody, an antigen-binding fragment of an ~~anti-IL21R~~ <u>anti-IL-21R</u> antibody and a soluble fragment of an IL-21R.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising identifying a T<u>hp</u> cell or cell population in which an inhibition <u>or reduction</u> of differentiation of <u>the</u> Thp cell or cell population into a Th2 cell or cell population is desired.

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13. (currently amended) A method for increasing interferon gamma (IFNγ) levels in a T cell or cell population, comprising[[:]] contacting said T cell or cell population from a subject or sample of interest with an antagonist of ~~an~~ IL-21[[/]] or IL-21R in an amount sufficient to increase IFNγ levels in said T cell or cell population, wherein the increase in IFNγ levels is measured by comparing the level of IFNγ in the T cell or cell population from the subject or sample of interest to the level of IFNγ in a T cell or cell population from a control subject or sample, and wherein the antagonist is selected from the group consisting of an ~~anti-IL21R~~ anti-IL-21R antibody, an antigen-binding fragment of an ~~anti-IL21R~~ anti-IL-21R antibody and a soluble fragment of an IL-21R.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 13, further comprising identifying a T cell or cell population in which an increase in IFNγ levels is desired.

15. (currently amended) The method of either claim 11 or 13, wherein the soluble fragment of ~~an~~ the IL-21R comprises an extracellular region of ~~an~~ the IL-21R ~~Receptor~~.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the ~~soluble fragment~~ extracellular region comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 85% identical to amino acids 20 to 235 of SEQ ID NO:4 and ~~which~~ is capable of binding IL-21.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the ~~soluble fragment~~ extracellular region comprises amino acids 1 to 235 of SEQ ID NO:4.

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the ~~soluble fragment~~ extracellular region further comprises an Fc fragment.

19. (currently amended) The method of either claim 11 or 13, wherein the antagonist is an ~~anti-IL21R~~ anti-IL-21R antibody or an antigen-binding fragment thereof.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~12~~ 13, wherein the T cell or cell population comprises at least one Th1 cell.

21. (currently amended) The method of either claim 11 or 13, wherein the contacting step is carried out ex vivo, in vitro or in vivo.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the contacting step is carried out in a mammalian subject.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the mammalian subject is a human.

24. (new) A method for inhibiting or reducing the differentiation of a Thp cell or cell population into a Th2 cell or cell population in a subject in need thereof, comprising administering to the subject a therapeutic agent selected from the group consisting of an anti-IL-21R antibody, an antigen-binding fragment of an anti-IL-21R antibody and a soluble fragment of an IL-21R.

25. (new) A method for increasing interferon gamma (IFNγ) levels in a T cell or cell population in a subject in need thereof, comprising administering to the subject a therapeutic agent selected from the group consisting of an anti-IL-21R antibody, an antigen-binding fragment of an anti-IL-21R antibody and a soluble fragment of an IL-21R.